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THE BUILDER,

NO. XXXII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1843.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, LEAMINGTON.

It may be necessary in again reverting to this subject, which we are constrained to by the receipt of Mr. Jackson's letter, to explain that it arrived in our absence last Wednesday evening; this will show that no time had been lost by that gentleman in meeting the issues of the Rev. Vicar of Leamington, as set forth in our previous number. If we had been at home, it would hardly have been convenient to have given insertion to Mr. Jackson's letter last week, for our readers may be given to understand that the circumstances under which we publish, oblige that most of our paper should be made up in the earliest days of the week: this explanation may be of special as well as of general service, and now we proceed with the remarks that appear to us to be particularly called for.

And here we must pause for a moment at the threshold of our court of inquiry, to enforce again, as it seems incumbent on us, with the best arguments we may use, the importance that attaches to this species of inquiry. If we could enter upon it in any thing of the spirit of partisanship, leaning to our professional brother on the one hand, or to our patronizing friend on the other, we should be unworthy of the post we aspire to, or of the confidence we seek to have reposed in us. Justice is our aim, and the object of our service. Justice, not stern always, but element, benignant, merciful—stern justice, administered by human hands, is impious and wicked tyranny—it is an impious assumption of the superhuman prerogative—it judges in the scales of a day the issues of eternity. Man with man has need to be all-merciful, all-placable, to be just. Who shall be placed in the balance, and found not wanting?

It may surprise some of our readers to find us thus impressed, and seeking to impress them, with a sense of gravity and solemnity in the discussion of this question. Trifles such as involve the character for just dealing in the matter of the appointment or rejection of an architect—and here again let us beg that our definition of human justice be borne in mind—trifles, concerning the adoption or rejection of a set of plans, scribblings and pencillings upon paper; trifles concerning the reputation for talent in an architect, and discrimination in an employer; trifles like these, for unfortunately we feel to be making use of the right epithet for the public mind; trifles like these to be made the subject of grave and solemn consideration and inquiry! Good heavens, some will exclaim, what a farce! To have to

adjudicate on matters of right and claim to territory,—to a foot of land on this or that side, an easement or water-course, a drain,—to settle the boundaries of an acre or a rood of land by the breadth of a ditch or the stump of a hedge,—the privilege of a pane of glass in this direction, or ingress and egress on that,—to determine a horse warranty, to assess the damage of a trespass, to award on a bet or matter of debt,—these are issues of gravity befitting the solemnities of a tribunal; calling for the presidency of the erminent arer, the empannelling of a jury of "peers," the advocacy of trained and subtle disputants, the forms and ceremonials of a court, and, above all, the awful solemnity of an oath; these are matters, say the good public, that we can understand and appreciate, but an inquest on professional fame impugned and maligned, on the right to mental conceptions, labour, and creations, on the deportment of those privileged with the custody of such stuff! who ever heard, or could think of such things? Good Public, you must be brought to bear, to think, and to ponder on such things, and to give them prominent place in your consideration, or England must remain what it so long has been,—inferior, sunken, lost in the sphere of art; poets, musicians, painters, sculptors, architects, philosophers, divines, burning lights and popular excellence in so one walk of high art can you expect to have, without a great reform in all this; great in war, great in policy, great in commerce, great in mechanical skill you may be; but the life, the soul, the intellect of greatness will be wanting; and wanting these, you are but the gaunt skeleton, the dry bones of a great mammoth, eyeless, tongueless, bloodless, brainless, heartless, and your power so much the greater, so much the sooner, like Belshazzar's, will be written down in its doom upon the wall.

Deaf ears and vacant astonishments will be turned upon our exord. What in the name of wonderment can all this pother amount to? Again, we say, it is not for us to tell, but for you to appreciate. The day is not far distant, and, by God's help, we will hasten it on, when the empire of mind will have its sway; when its privileges, rights, immunities, will be understood, and trespass on blood will be safer than upon blood's continent—the seizure of life more free, than murderous profanation of the seed of life.

This ALL SAINTS affair is a little matter, and it is a large matter, for it involves a large principle; as the little globe partakes of all the properties of the globe of which it forms a myriadth, so does this in hand involve as much as we care to dwell upon in the arrest of error. The Rev. Vicar of Leamington and his once confident-presumptive have done us the honour to appear in our court; but there is another witness wanting, or rather another party, whom we shall not presume to cite, not doubting, however, that he will come forward, and this is Mr. Mitchell. He can say with speech unknown to either of the other two, how far he is carrying out the designs and conceptions of his predecessor, and upon what ground he feels to be justified in it. The case is not too high to set any one above accountability, it is not too low for inquiry; and we would fain that the principle of accountability, and the privilege of inquiry should be put upon a right basis for this once, as a precedent for all.

If Mr. Mitchell be qualified for the task he has undertaken, in the sense conveyed by the rev. vicar, and not disputed by Mr. Jackson, he is also competent to help us out in a correct decision on the matter before us; the

"modest merit" which his reverend patron testifies to, and to which we shall be happy to bear witness, may not be best exemplified in silence now; the modest sense of one's own talent is generally accompanied by an active perception with regard to another's. Oh, we should not be wanting in great architects now-a-days, if mainly virtue, if Christian virtue lived freely in and were encouraged among us. We have a tale in our recollection, but the names are not certain to us just now, which we will tell. It has perhaps a higher reference, but do we not always draw from high example the precedent for humble imitation?—it is of ARCHITECTS, and a PATRON, and a PROTECTOR, in so far as we bring them forward, worthy of each other. Let us recommend it to the attention of our readers, and of those more immediately concerned in this matter.

A king of France sent for an architect from Italy to prepare designs for, and to build him a palace in the capital. Honoured by royal commands, the architect set out on his journey, his reputation preceding him, and he was met on his entrance to the French metropolis with greetings and applauses, and entertained at court with honours such as few but sovereigns receive. He was himself a sovereign in the realms of art; but the *uninherited* distinction, the crown of genius, which he so nobly had won and worn, were accompanied with fit associate gifts and virtues. That eagle-eye which had prompted his soarings in the sphere empyreal, glared not with unboly ambition, was bleared not with selfish and mercenary efforts at inward looking, but shone bright and piercing; in it true modesty was indeed enthroned. He saw that France had her architects, and renounced for himself the short-lived distinction of building a palace for the immortal renown of recommending a French contemporary. Art had made them brothers, and precluding himself before his generous patron, he claimed for and assigned to his brother his privilege. "France, Sir," said he, "has her architects: in her own children, wherefore send you for me?" Not the commands of a patron, and still less had he been a capricious one; not the commands of a ROYAL PATRON; not the glory of building a palace for a king, under the eye of a nation, and to be seen and admired by the world, could tempt that great man to swerve from the path of virtue. Brotherly love and brotherly justice,—for where had he brothers so near and so dear as in the house and temple of their common mother, Art,—brotherly love was not to be profaned under the roof of that illustrious. He retired without strife, nay, he drew forth and placed under the carving hand that was designed for his own, the head of his brother; he retired, but how did he retire? The welcome, the acclamation, the glory, of his entrance into Paris was a mockery of that of his going out; he was venerated, worshipped, and adored by the populace—yes, the populace, enrolling all in its ranks, king, nobles, citizens, did full measure of homage to this more than conqueror of nations—this conqueror of self; and Art, and Architecture in particular, has this golden narrative living in her archives, to stimulate her children in all times of future reading, to emulate the more than princely virtue of him of whose example it so eloquently speaks.

Now we will not say a word more; the minister of peace, the best interpreter and guide in the halls of charity, and who has shown himself keenly alive to the call for the fitting and beautiful decoration of the sanctuary of the God of charity,